



Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Scholars Compass

RELS 108 Human Spirituality

School of World Studies

2015

Hillcrest United Methodist Church

Janelle Hertzog
hertzogjn@vcu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/rels108>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

© The Author

Downloaded from

<http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/rels108/83>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of World Studies at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in RELS 108 Human Spirituality by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.

Hillcrest United Methodist Church

by Janelle Hertzog

On Sunday November 22, 2015 I attended Hillcrest United Methodist Church located at 2208 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. I went to the 11 AM to 12 PM service with my grandparents. They also have an 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM service on Sundays. The church's denominational affiliation is Methodist and the presiding official or pastor was Justin Williams.

We arrived at the church around 10:45 AM and the first thing I noticed was the sign in front of the church, next to the parking lot, that had "Hillcrest United Methodist Church" on the top and then a space below for the list of announcements and upcoming events. The church was very small and made of brick with many windows. It was two stories with two entrances, one in the front and one on the side. Everyone was going through the side entrance. Upon entering the church we were greeted by all the people of the church just walking around setting everything up for the upcoming service, they were all very nice.

The inside lobby area of the church was very small as well but there were many billboards of pictures of new members, the youth groups activities, and upcoming events. There were a set of stairs to the left and the area where the sermon was going to take place was to the right. It was all very older looking and I knew the church had been in the area for a long time. Before walking into the sermon area an older man greeted us by shaking all of our

hands and gave us the church service bulletin which was a piece of paper that explained everything that was going to take place within the sermon that day. When we walked into the sermon area, we sat down at a pew that was in the middle. There were pews on the left and the right side and they were not very filled up. There were about 10 to 15 people sitting down when we arrived. All of the people were older, ages 60 to 90 I would say, were women, middle class, and were Caucasian. A few small families arrived here and there.

There were bibles and hymn books at every pew and there were enough for everyone to have one. The pastor's stand was in the middle at the very front, and to the right of him were some pews for the chorus to sit with a piano placed right in front of them. Directly behind him was a giant wooden cross that was lit up in the back, it was beautiful. The ceiling in the church was pretty high and there was about 12 windows surrounding all of us, which made the room pretty bright and lively. All the walls were white. I sat with my grandparents and each family kind of had their own spot that they sat at.

When the service began, Pastor Williams walked in and asked us to stand as the chorus walked in and stood in front of the pews with their hymn books open to a page. The pianist then walked in and took her seat. The church service bulletin we were given explained which hymns we would be singing, when we

would be singing them, and what pages they were on. I grabbed a book, shared it with my grandma, and the pianist began playing "The Spirit of God". We all began to sing along and it was nice to see everyone participating. The feel was very casual and more personal as the church was so small and everyone was so close. After we finished singing the first hymn we began singing another one and after that the pastor began his sermon.

this church made me feel a little out of my element. •

Written Fall 2015. © Janelle Hertzog.

He called all the children of the church up to the front of the room to have a little discussion with them. He asked them what they were thankful for as Thanksgiving was coming up that week. They all answered and were then sent to children's church where they would color and read the bible. He then asked everyone if there was anyone we wanted the whole church to pray for. Many people raised their hands and gave names of people who were about to have surgery or had cancer or were very sick. After everyone was finished, Pastor Williams led us in a prayer for those that were mentioned and everyone in general. After the prayer he began talking to us about giving thanks and the deeper meaning behind it. When he was finished the chorus then stood up again and we all sang from the hymn books. There was definitely a lot of singing. When the service ended, Pastor Williams walked to the back of the church where we were all exiting and he shook everyone's hand. Some people he had a short conversation with if he had known them for a while or just if they were thanking him for the wonderful service he gave.

Overall it was a great service, just very different from what I am used to. At my church there is a whole band who plays music with wonderful singers, so the traditional feel of